No. 66

The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF WRONGED WOMANHOOD

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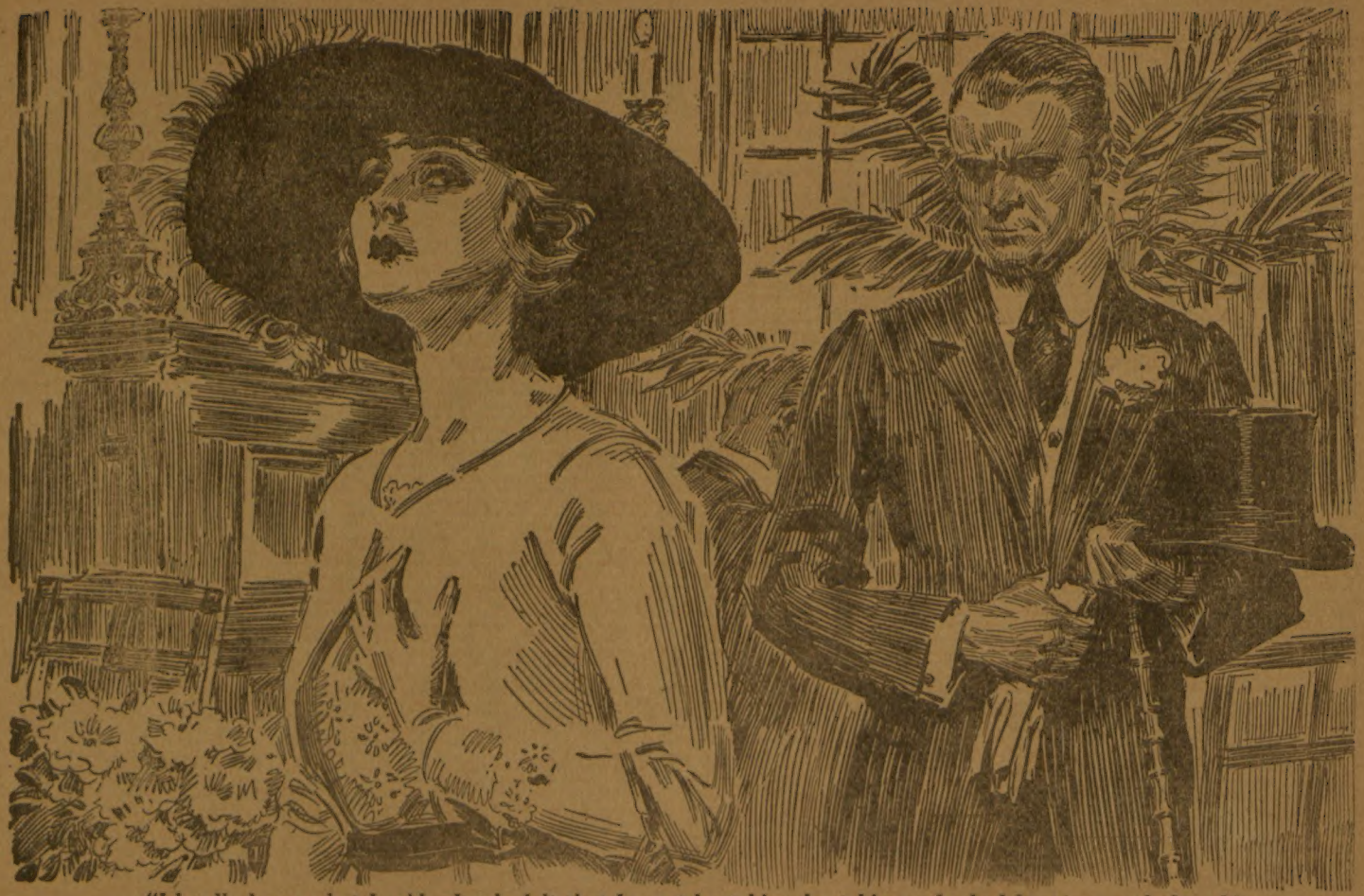

"I hardly knew what I said. I only felt that I must hurt him; hurt him as he had hurt me, and show him how much I despised him."

R. of M. G., No. 66.

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FROM WHAT Dr. Van Buren had told her, the nurse was prepared to find a great many things wanting at the Ivy Cottage, and she had provided herself with what she knew would be necessary. A great black bag she had brought was filled with victuals, and also contained some medicines prescribed by the doctor who had put his purse at her disposal, remarking that she was not to economize in any way.

Olive Carrel plied up the hearth with wood, and soon there was a lusty fire roaring in the grate.

The young woman lay in the freshly-laid bed and contentedly gave herself up to the luxury of the warm lavender-scented sheets.

From time to time she opened her eyes to watch the nurse's quiet, soothing activity.

Hours passed. Night was already lowering its veil when Ellen Knight suddenlly arose with a low cry from a half slumber.

She had heard her husband's heavy step outside.

"Oh, God!" she murmured, shaking all over, "he is coming home! Now there will be trouble."

Olive Carrel laid her cool hand quietly on the feverish brow of her patient.

"Don't be alarmed," she soothed. "I know how to handle him."

She had barely spoken the words when the door opened. The heavy, lagging steps came through the little vestibule, and Knight staggered into the room.

He was greatly taken aback, however, when he saw the nurse at his wife's bedside. The veins in his drink-reddened face swelled angrily.

"What this?!" he cried menacingly. "Who let you in the house—how did you get in?!"

"Through the window," was the quiet answer.

"The door was locked and there was no other way."

"The devil you did!" he snarled. "You came into my house through the window? What do you want here anyway? I didn't send for you!"

"No, but Dr. Van Buren did." Olive Carrel met the drunkard erect and with quiet dignity. "Your wife is very ill, and as you are not doing anything for her, others must look after her!"

"Bosh! my wife is not sick," he cried. "She needs no nurse. See that you get away at once! I don't want any praying hypocrite around here to turn my wife's head still more. Well, are you going?"

Olive Carrel quietly sat down at the bedside.

Ellen, however, rose trembling, took the arm of the nurse and pleaded:

"For pity's sake do not irritate him,—he is capable of striking you!"

Not a muscle moved in the nurse's grave face. She was without fear.

Firmly and decisively she answered:

"I am not going. It is but Christian duty to stay here! You have no right to drive help away from your wife! I will not trouble you."

Having thus energetically delivered herself, she ignored the drunkard entirely, and turned to prepare compresses for his wife without giving him any further notice.

The man stood opened-mouthed. This was something new for him.

This woman dared to defy him! That any woman should ever defy him was a possibility he had apparently never even thought of.

He choked down an exclamation, and it seemed as though his rage would break out all the more violently.

Suddenly, however, he threw his hat on a chair with an angry gesture, and went into the adjoining room.

Ellen could not contain herself any longer; her excitement was uncontrollable.

What had the poor woman suffered from this brute, that she feared him so?!

After a while, Knight came in again, planting himself before Olive Carrel, and asked with drunken pride:

"What are your expenses? I will take no charity from you or anyone else. I can pay for everything —do you understand me?"

Olive Carrell continued to look at him with the utmost calmness.

"It is sad enough, if you have had the means to procure care for your wife and neglected her," she told him. "I will take nothing from you; I am paid by the community, but you must pay for the support of your wife, if you have the means, as you say."

Knight threw a handful of coins on the table. His wife stared at him with wide-opened eyes, anxiously surveying the money as he stood there, jingling more coins in his pocket

"The money——!" she gasped, stretching her hand towards him. "Where did you get the money, John? We had nothing—nothing—and you have not been working."

The man's face changed fearfully. He clenched his hands and seemed about to rush on his wife, but the nurse was already between them.

"Let her be!" she commanded sternly.

He recoiled. He had found his master in this woman.

Her poise and resolute manner disarmed him.

Somehow, he did not have the audacity to face her. With a growl, he left the room and threw himself down on his bed and went to sleep.

The patient spent a bad night. Her fantasy occupied itself with the money which she had seen in her husband's hand.

"John," she moaned, "how deep have you sunk! You have forgotten your promise at my mother's deathbed. Don't you remember? Oh, how unhappy you have made me!

"Oh, where does the money come from? There is blood on it,—throw it from you! You have always been honest, John—John, do not bring disgrace and shame on us!"

Olive Carrel was moved almost to tears. What had this poor soul to suffer?

That she was of good family was plain, and it was equally clear that she had come to misery through her husband.

Nor was Knight resting peaceably. He had not closed the door behind, and the nurse, who slept but lightly, was roused by his sleepy, drunken exclamations.

Suddenly she heard him say, quite connectedly:

"That't all right, Burt,—you needn't be afraid. I'll not give you away. But put up,—I'm in a hole. I won't say anything, and you will keep out of prison!"

Then he became incoherent.

Olive Carrel shuddered. What terrible secret rested on the mind of this brutal fellow?! His wife had foreboded that the money she had seen was gotten dishonestly.

Knight slept until late in the morning. When, at last, he awoke, he dressed quickly to leave the house. He had not a look, not a word for his wife.

As he was about to leave thus, Olive Carrel said

coolly and with determination:

"I want you to leave the house key with me so that I can come in and out at any time."

Without a murmur, he put the key on the table and left.

Chapter 217.

SHATTERED HAPPINESS.

ELLEN KNIGHT breathed easier when her husband had gone. She was in great pain, but bore it with touching patience. Olive Carrel appeared to her like an angel of mercy.

Though she found few words to thank her, her warm, grateful looks expressed all the more fully what she felt.

Miss Carrel could see the young woman's great shyness, but noticed, too, that she yearned to confide her troubles to some sympathetic soul, but could not seem to find the courage.

"Is that your mother, Mrs. Knight?" she asked, pointing to a picture on the wall.

The tears, so long restrained, now poured forth.

"Yes, it is," sobbed Ellen. "It is nearly two years since she died. Oh, how happy I was while she lived! She indulged me as only a lone child can be spoiled."

Now, that the ice was broken, the young woman found courage to speak.

"My father was a prosperous business man," she began. "When he died, my mother did not want to give up our pretty little home. There were so many things which we would have had to sell, so she resolved to let out a room.

"We were in comfortable circumstances," she continued, taking a long breath. "My father had left some investments. The house was free and clear, and we could live without care. We soon had a lodger. He was a young architect who was preparing for his final

examinations.

"You can easily guess that he was my husband. He made a great impression on us; my mother, especially, was very much taken with him, for he knew just how to ingratiate himself.

"She invited him often to join us at table, and we really spent many a pleasant hour in his company.

"After he passed his examinations, he himself, sought our company more than before. At first I had a sort of prejudice against him. I do not know just what it was, but it seemed to me, sometimes, as though he could not look me in the eye.

"But little by little, I learned to like him. He took great pains to please me, and, like all mothers, mine was happy that I had found an admirer.

"Then came the day when he proposed. I thought I loved him and accepted him, and my mother blessed our union. We made the most wonderful plans. John had already received some commissions.

"Soon his reputation would be established, and he would be an independent man. All he needed was a little capital to make a start with. My mother lent only too willing an ear to his plans.

"After our marriage she trustfully gave him all the ready money she had to go ahead with; and at first everything did go well. John built small residences in the suburbs and sold them profitably.

"We would have been happy, very happy, had not my mother fallen ill—but perhaps it was better so. She died after a short illness, and, thank God, she did not live to see my sufferings.

"On her death-bed she exhorted John to remain upright and to make her only child happy with his love and all this he promised sacredly. But how he changed after her death!

"It was not long before he got into bad company. Instead of following his calling as heretofore, he began to play the gentleman; bought an expensive car and drove about like a man of wealth. I remonstrated with him, but he laughed at me and said:

" 'You do not understand, my child. Fine feathers make fine birds. A fine appearance creates good credit, and that's what I need in my business.'

"I could not enjoy the luxury with which he surrounded me, for I felt it was not real. Things went on like this for some time.

"John was at home but little; his new friends occupied him too much. Naturally his business suffered. He received no commissions, and finally he ran into debt.

"To cap our misfortunes, he began to gamble, hoping to make money that way. Many a night he did not come home at all. I foresaw what would happen, and it was not long before the end came.

"His creditors seized the houses which he had built but not yet sold. But this was not all; his reputation was gone and he could find no work in his profession.

"At last there was nothing left for him to do but to look for some other work. But his desire to work was really gone. He had no ambition.

"He could not resign himself to work under others; his disposition was too proud and domineering. He could not keep a single position he got, and he sank lower and lower.

"Our money was gone. I had nothing left but my furnishings, and I was compelled to sell them, piece by piece. Last of all, John began to drink—as he said, to drown his troubles and misery."

The young woman paused, sobbing. The memory

of her grief robbbed her of speech.

"Do not excite yourself," warned the nurse. "You can tell me more later."

"No, no," Mrs. Knight cried, "you can not know what a relief it is for me to speak ont. I have never had anyone in whom I could confide. In the town where we were known, I was too proud to complain, and we have been here only a short time, and I am a stranger.

"I have borne the most inhuman treatment since he began to drink. He has become a beast. I am ashamed to tell you how he has treated me. More than once I contemplated ending my life in my desperation.

"Sorrow and trouble brought me on the sick bed. If God, in His Goodness, had let me die, all would have been well."

"Do not sin against God," said Olive Carrel gravely. "You do not know,—you can not tell what God, in His wisdom, holds for you in the future."

"For me?" The unhappy woman loughed bitterly. "I expect no more happiness on this earth. Now, that I possess nothing more, I am only in my husband's way.

"If I were strong and well, I could go my own way and earn my living among strangers. It would a thousand times better for me, for no one could maltreat me.

"But to be dependent upon a man whom I despise —from whom I shrink;Oh, Miss Carrel, tell me,—is this not worse than death?"

Olive Carrel looked at her compassionately and shook her head.

Did she comprehend the young woman's feelings? She herself had never known the bliss of love and the joys of marriage, nor its sorrows.

There are women who can not live without love or passion, and although they may bring with them inhuman sufferings, they bear them patiently rather than

relinquish one hour of the love which they may receive.

Olive Carrel, however, was not one of these women.

She had looked deeply into life and beheld so many shadows that she had preferred to renounce love and its ways, and insure her peace of mind.

The world, to her, was but a valley of tears; its joys were bitter to the taste, its pleasures hollow, and its griefs lasting.

What had this young woman gained through her marriage? Nothing but trouble and sorrow. Olive was unspeakably sorry for her.

"Yes, your lot is a sad one," she said sympathetically. "I am certainly not in favor of divorce, but in your case, it would be self-degradation if you lived together longer with such a man.

"A woman must not set her own worth too low. Let me nurse you back to health and strength, and you will want to live and struggle, and ways and means will be found for you to free yourself."

Ellen smiled wearily. She had forgotten how to hope.

At this juncture, there was a loud knock at the door, and Olive Carrel hurried out to open it.

"It is I, Miss Carrel," said a well-known voice, and as she opened, she saw Dr. Van Buren's friendly face.

"Well, how is your patient getting on?" he asked.

"She is a martyr, doctor," the nurse replied. "As soon as she is better, we must take her away from that brute of a husband, or he will wreck her. The poor thing has gone through a terrible ordeal."

In brief words, she told the doctor what she had seen and heard.

"I thought something of the kind," he said. "This fellow has almost ruined her mind and broken her spirit.

I felt, when I first saw her, that her suffering was more mental than physical."

As Dr. Van Buren entered the sick room, a delicate flush colored Ellen's fine, sweet face.

He went to her with kindly greeting, and as he took her hand, he felt how it trembled in his.

While he spoke to the young woman, he did not take his glance from her once, and a queer sensation crept into his heart.

His patient exercised a peculiar charm over him which he sought in vain to explain.

Although he had a great deal to do, he spent more than half an hour at Ellen's bedside, and seemed unable to ask enough questions, or give enough directions for her care.

But seldom did she turn her eyes toward him, but when she did so, a current of emotion ran through him, such as he had never felt before.

On leaving, he again took her hand, and looked deep into her eyes, full of pity.

Strange, this was but the second time he had seen this woman, but she was not like a stranger to him. It seemed as if he might have known her for years.

Olive Carrel went to the door with him.

"You can hardly believe, Dr. Van Buren," she said to him outside, "how poor Mrs. Knight trembles at the thought of her husband's coming home. He will never come to any good, I can see that.

"As you say that she is merely weak and run down, it is to be hoped that, with sufficient rest and good care, she will soon recover; but what are we to do with her then? If she stays with her husband, she cannot keep well.

"She is not constituted to adapt herself to her lot. For a time, perhaps, she may endure her drunken hus-

band's brutality, but, if one day there should be a catastrophe, I would not be surprised!"

Dr. Van Buren nodded and looked thoughtfully to the ground. The nurse was right.

It was difficult to judge such a character as that of Mrs. Knight. There was a possibility that time would blunt her sensibilities, and that, in the end, she would not feel the degradation of her position.

The opposite was equally possible. Though, for a time, she bore her husband's brutality quietly and patiently.

When the measure of his maltreatment brimmed over, when her burden became too great for her strength, she would revolt, and then something would happen of which this little woman would never have been deemed capable.

But how to prevent such a misfortune? What was he to do?

What could he do to spare her from a continuation of an existence which had already driven her to the verge of desperation, to the brink of the grave?

All at once he raised his head again; he had an idea. A man could do but little here. A man could only take hold in an extremity.

Ellen Knight's constitutional modesty would not permit her to confide or trust herself to a strange man; he must find a woman.

To the right one she would open her heart and listen to, and follow her advice, and such a woman he thought he knew—Marie Desmond.

He knew that she was again at Oak Manor, but he had not yet seen her.

After his last talk with her, he was rather anxious to avoid a meeting with her, and even in this matter he did not intend to communicate with her directly.

But if there was a woman who could help this poor creature so far as human energy and sympathy could help her, she was the one.

And if she heard Ellen Knight's pitiful story; if she saw her, and realized the touching helplessness in her eyes, she would help her, he was convinced.

"You are right, Miss Carrel," he finally answered, "something must be done. I know someone with whom you can advise as to what to do. It is Miss Desmond, the governess at Mr. Gordon's manor.

"I wish you would opply to her; I am sure she would actively assist you and will be able to adivse you well. Now I must get along. I have a long list of visits ahead of me."

He walked quickly up the road while the nurse returned to her patient.

Could Olive Carrel — could Marie Desmond but know what was before them!

Chapter 218

HEARTS OF GOLD

THE NORTHERN EXPRESS had just come in. Its monstrous head of iron and steel and hissing flame, seemed to heave a strenuous sigh of satisfaction on reaching the end of its long journey. A young, fashionably attired girl walked quickly along the standing cars, followed at a short distance by a man in livery.

"Oh, there you are, Margaret!" she suddenly cried, and rushed on Margaret Wentworth who was alighting from one of the Pullmans.

"Ethel! Is it really you?" smiled Margaret, kissing her. "My, how you have grown! I hardly recognize you. Let me introduce you to my friend, Lillian Crawford, and her intended, Mr. Talbot."

"This is Miss Ethel Sanders," she said, introducing the young lady, "a cousin of mine, at least our mothers are cousins. Isn't that it, Ethel? But, nevertheless, we consider ourselves closely related and we are great friends."

With a beaming smile, such as Lillian had not seen on her friend's face for a long time, Margaret put her arm through Ethel's after the greetings were over.

The footman had brought the luggage, meantime, and they took their seats in the waiting automobile that was to take them to the Sanders.

With a critical eye, Ethel examined the bridal couple about whom Margaret had already written her.

"Mr. Talbot is very handsome," she whispered to

her cousin. "Mother is just crazy to see the couple. What a romantic courtship they have had! I hope I can have something like that."

"Wish nothing of the kind, my dear," said Margaret Wentworth soberly. "If you knew what these two had to go through on account of their love, you would not envy them. They have had an awful struggle for their happiness, and who knows how many more bitter experiences are before them."

Margaret's gayiety had suddenly disappeared. The sadness of her own heart had been reawakened.

She was in the same city where the man to whom she had lost her heart, lived; so near, and yet—so far.

Unconsciously, as they drove through Quebec's quaint old streets, she leaned forward and scrutinized the passersby, as though she must see him among them.

Victor Talbot related to Ethel the circumstances of an accident on the road which had somewhat affected Lillian.

In fact, the bride seemed somewhat pale and weary. Nevertheless, her smile was joyous; she was so supremely happy with the man of her heart!

At last they reached their young companion's home — a big, roomy, old-fashioned house; broad and low, with extensive grounds about it.

As they entered the hall, Ethel said to her cousin:

"I suppose you don't know that mother has turned the house into a family hotel. Yes," she laughed, "we were getting hard up and our friends advised us to do something of the kind.

"It was a fine idea; mother has lots of guests and they pay well. Just now there is a family of four from Paris ,then there is a lady from Berlin, and two school teachers from Boston.

"You have no idea how interesting it is. It's jolly!

We enjoy it so much, and mother is happy that she went into it."

The pecuniary side of the matter apparently, affected Ethel Sanders much less than its pleasureable considerations.

Margaret was visibly surprised. She made no remarks, but quietly formed her own opinion.

Her wondering gaze saw men in livery, and her astonishment was still greater when she was met at the head of the stairs by a maid in waiting who led her into an elegantly furnished salon, such as she had certainly not expected to find.

"This is all left from the old times when father was still living," said Ethel merrily.

Turning to the maid, she said lightly, "tell Mrs. Sanders that we are here."

A few minutes later, Mrs. Sanders entered the room. She was a matronly looking woman whose clear, white skin, blue eyes and portly figure, showed her to be of Dutch descent.

Her bearing was one of queenly dignity, but she fairly beamed with hospitality.

She welcomed her guests most amiably, and invited Victor Talbot, who had engaged rooms at a neighboring hotel, to stay to dinner.

Lillian would have preferred to rest until she had recovered from her fatigue, instead of having so many strange faces about her, but she resigned herself to the inevitable.

Mrs. Sanders understood, in a masterly manner, how to make her guests comfortable although, on the surface, she did not appear to depend entirely on her people.

It was this very fact that took from her establishment the air of a boarding-house, and gave it a home-

like atmōsphere which never failed to charm her guests.

It was quite natural, too, under the circumstances, that Mrs. Sanders was met by her guests more on the footing of a hostess, than in the position of a boarding-house mistress.

The conversation at table flowed more freely and was more interesting than is usually the case among the strangers in a hotel or boarding house.

The guests themselves were a study. The wife of the somewhat blase Parisian, dressed in the height of fashion, seemed to bubble over with the spirits of everlasting youth.

Her husband took but little part in the talk, but feasted his eyes on the three young ladies opposite.

Their children, a girl of twelve and a boy of fifteen, were most diverting; the girl a replica of the graceful, vivacious mother.

The boy was precocious, with a sarcastic expression, as if to say, "you think me a child, but I know more than you imagine!" His eyes, like his father's, were for the three girls.

What a contrast to this family were two Englishmen, father and son, on the other side of the table; coolly reserved, complacent with smug self-satisfaction.

They sat, dignified and quiet beside the lady of the house, who seemed to accord them particular attention.

They had been touring Canada and, charmed with quaint old Quebec, were making a prolonged stay, especially as the early Canadian winter was close at hand, and they desired to see "Our Lady of the Snows" in her cold, white beauty.

"Margaret, Mr. Vandrift is simply wild about me, he is too funny for anything!" whispered Ethel mischievously to her neighbor.

"Who—the son?" asked Miss Wentworth.

"No, dear, the father," replied Ethel Sanders, "and he is old enough to be my father, twice over. Of course, mother would be a better match for his years. But his money—oh, his money!" she added. "I guess I will have to marry him, after all. I know mother would like it."

Margaret did not know whether to laugh at Ethel or to be sorry for her.

The young girl maintained a serious expression, and whether she was jesting or not, Margaret could not decide.

This young girl — still a child — and that aging man! It was monstrous. But his money! What cannot money often accomplish?

Margaret sat opposite the young lady from Berlin, whom she tried to place at her ease by speaking to her in German.

The young lady, however, answered in English which she was mastering, unwilling to lose an opportunity of improvement by practice.

In comparison to the Parisian, more than twenty years her senior, she seemed heavy and mature.

Conversation ran on every topic; on art, literature, politics, on fashions or society. Lillian, who participated but little in the talk, listened with all the more interest.

"I am taking lessons in painting from Gerard Mirabeau," said Fraulein Gunther to Victor Talbot, who had managed to induce her to speak in German, which he spoke fluently. "It was difficult to reach him; he has a great name, and I expect to make great progress."

The spoon which Margaret Wentworth was raising to her mouth, almost fell from her trembling hand; she did not dare to return the glance which she felt Lillian was directing at her.

Talbot, who had no suspicion how close had been Margaret's relations to the great painter, spoke enthusiastically about his pictures, while Fraulein Gunther tried to tell the company in her stilted English, of the artist's work and life.

Although he was still a young man, they learned, he was of a very serious disposition; she had never seen him smile.

His devotion to his mother was touching in the extreme. Mrs. Mirabeau was charming in her manner, enchanting in her loveliness.

She had such fine features, dark eyes set off by snowy white hair. Fraulein Gunther saw her but seldom, but it was evident that the artist's mother had made a deep impression on her.

Thank goodness, the dinner was over and the table was being cleared. Margaret could hardly control herself longer.

She was already struggling with tears. Quickly she went to her room to indulge herself in a quiet cry.

While Lillian was resting, Victor Talbot went to a minister to arrange for the wedding.

To his relief he found that it could take place in a day or two, there being but a few formalities to be observed.

Lillian rejoiced at the news, for secretly she was still oppressed by a fear that her step-mother might still be able to prevent their marriage.

In the morning, after breakfast, Lillian approached Fraulein Gunther, who was preparing to go to her art lesson.

Talbot had gone to the public offices to attend to the necessary formalities for the coming wedding, and Lillian took advantage of the time this gave her to put into execution a plan which she had carefully thought

out on the evening before.

"I am dying to see Mr. Mirabeau's studio," she began. "Do you think you could procure me admission?"

"Why not?" answered the good-natured Fraulein Gunther. "I am sure he will have no objection to your visiting his salon where you can see some new pictures of his. Come with me, Miss Crawford. I am glad to see you take such an interest in art."

Lillian smiled with satisfaction. This was a good beginning.

She told Margaret Wentworth nothing of her intentions, but led her to believe that she was going to keep an appointment with Victor Talbot.

Inwardly excited, Lillian followed her guide to the fine establishment Gerard Mirabeau had made his own since his advent in Quebec.

It was not, however, a permanent home.

When the Canadian winter came with its short days and long nights he would take his mother with him to the sunny South, not to return again until late in the spring.

The artist's home was a revelation to Lillian, accustomed though she was to homes of fashion and wealth.

He had acquired by purchase a fine old residence, the erstwhile family seat of one of those noble French families who were the original settlers of Canada.

Its situation was such that it had a complete view of the St. Lawrence Valley and the hills in the distance.

The exterior of the house did honor to its owner's artistic tastes, while the interior was delightful. There was a dark oak staircause, with a most curiously carved and twisted balustrate.

Some ancient tapestry still hung on the walls and there were faded portraits of stiff ladies in ruffs, and fierce knights in armor, which their present owner was

loath to part with in view of their real beauty and antique worth.

On the whole, the place was undoubtedly a fine object for any artist's study. Its architecture was well-night perfect, and all the surroundings were eminently picturesque.

Gerard Mirabeau had achieved all this, although he had been born in comparative poverty and brought up in somewhat straitened circumstances.

He owed his position to nothing but the exercise of his own wonderful powers—and this was a matter of public knowledge.

In the great, impressive room which he had converted into a salon for hanging his finished work, a number of other artists were assembled, some for study and others for friendly criticism.

Fraulein Gunther now took her leave of Lillian to go to the studio itself, to which at this hour, no one but Mirabeau's pupils had admission.

She arranged with Lillian, that, after the latter had seen the pictures, she was to wait for her at a confectioner's nearby.

But Lillian did not seem to evince any eagerness to inspect the pictures, now that the Fraulein was gone.

To be sure she did look at the paintings, which would have captured the attention of the veriest amateur in art, but her thoughts were occupied by another subject.

As a maid opened the door to admit a new visitor, Lillian went to her and asked, somewhat nervously:

"Can you tell me whether I could see Mrs. Mirabeau?"

The girl shook her head.

"I hardly think so. Mrs. Mirabeau seldom receives visitors. At first many admires of Mrs. Mira-

beau tried to see her and associate with her and her son, but she did not care for it, and I have never seen her receive any callers."

This information was not very encouraging. For a few seconds Lillian was baffled. Then she had an idea.

"I wish you would at least take my card to her," she said. "Please. I really want to see her on a private matter; perhaps she will see me."

Quickly she wrote the following lines:

"Will you be good enough to grant me an interview with you alone? The happiness of your son may depend upon it."

She asked the maid for an envelope to enclose the card and handed the sealed message back to her with a coin. This was effective.

The maid went at once to her mistress, and Lillian, with beating heart, waited for the answer. She had not waited long before the maid returned.

"Mrs. Hirsheau will receive you," she announced. "I am to take you right up."

"Thank goodness!" thought Lillian, following her. There was a silent fervent prayer in her heart for the success of her undertaking.

The chambers which were occupied by the artist's mother were almost startling in their simplicity, in contrast to the other appointments of the house.

Nevertheless, there was a restful atmosphere of comfort. Blooming flowers in rich profusion lent to the whole a most home-like impression.

The maid led Lillian into a cozy little room where she found the old gentlewoman seated at a work table.

Beside her stood a tall, rather slender young man with fine, classic features, and she could not help but note the broad, intellectual brow and the brilliant hazel eyes with just a suggestion of sadness in them.

A slight tremor of uneasiness went through Lillian. Intuitively, she knew this could be no one but Gerard Mirabeau.

For a moment she stood in confusion at the door, mute and uncomfortable. Mrs. Mirabeau had risen.

Fraulein Gunther's description had barely done her justice.

Her appearance was typical of the highest type of charming womanhood and exquisite gracefulness — which with years had not been erased.

Her delicate, patrician face was one which once seen could never be forgotten. The grave, noble features, however, bore traces of deep sorrows.

She must have suffered intensely for the sake of her love when her proud, high-spirited father had disowned her. But her eyes, which were still resting on her son, shone with maternal pride and affection.

The sad years through which she had passed were recompensed by her son's great love and devotion, and her declining years were brightened by her happiness in him.

Lillian's glance was attracted to the artist himself; there was something affecting in the deep melancholy of his countenance; the far-off wistfulness that lurked in his eyes.

"Do you wish to speak to me?" asked the old lady in a low, pleasant voice, while she quietly observed Lillian's blushing face.

"Yes, madam, but I requested the favor of seeing you alone," came back.

"Pardon me—I will not disturb you," said Gerard graciously. "I am wanted in the study anyway."

His mother introduced him to Miss Crawford. Gerard then kissed his mother's hand and turned from the room, bowing silently to Lillian.

The two women were now alone.

"Won't you be seated, Miss Crawford? You have chosen a method of reaching me which I, as a mother, can not resist. I have no one in the world but my son, Miss Crawford, and you can well believe that there is nothing more important to me than his happiness."

"And yet your son is not happy," answered Lillian bravely. "He can not be, Mrs. Mirabeau, for he is suffering from an awful disappointment which he, himself, can not overcome. Was it known to you that he fell in love with a girl at New York, and that it is on her account that he is now so unhappy?"

Mrs. Mirabeau's eyes filled with tears.

"Yes, I know all, Miss Crawford," she declared. "Gerard has no secrets from his mother. It is because he did love this girl so deeply and sincerely, that her loss is so hard for him to bear."

"And my poor friend has not had a happy moment since the time that she hurt him so terribly," Lillian cried. "Mrs. Mirabeau, I am Miss Wentworth's dearest friend. After many trials, God has granted me happiness, and now that I have found it, I want Alice to be happy, too.

"Do not look so unforgiving, Mrs. Mirabeau—Margaret does not deny what she said and did; she blasted his hopes and hurt his pride! Will you hear me? Perhaps, when you know under what circumstances Margaret said what she did, you will take a milder view of the case."

In eloquent words, Lillian described the scene which had destroyed Margaret Wentworth's happiness and left her embittered and disconsolate.

Greatly wrought up, the old lady clasped her hands.

"My God, my God!" she said tremulously. "How

could they say such things? Gerard loved Miss Wentworth so truly and deeply; how could she ever have thought him capable of baseness! I have seen her picture. She is not beautiful; it was the charm of her disposition and intellect which captured him.

"I know my son! I was not in New York at the time, and he never tired of writing me of how happy he was—how happy he was to have found the girl who possessed all the attributes of his highest ideal of womanhood.

"Then, like a thunder-clap, I received a mournful letter which said that all was over—that his happiness was lost and that it had all been a dream. He said he had looked up to her as to a goddess, but she, at a blow, had destroyed what he had held so sacred.

"She believed he was a miserable fortune-hunter—he, who would have loved her if she had been a beggar! 'You know what I care for wealth, mother,' he wrote me, 'you know it would have cost me but a word and I would have been heir to my grandfather's wealth.'

"He wrote me all about it. Oh, Miss Crawford, how poorly Miss Wentworth knew him and understood him! How petty her love must have been——"

The proud woman dried the tears which she had been unable to suppress at the thought of her son's grief which had become hers.

Lillian felt sorry for her, and was greatly moved.

"He has borne his disappointment like a man, but he has not been able to forget her," continued Mrs. Mirabeau, after a pause. "All the fame and wealth he has reaped have not made him happy. He has never had joy in his heart since. Often I have seen him sick over his lost happiness.

"'Has there ever been a complete happiness on earth?' he said to me. 'You, too, suffered for the sake

of your love for father. Why did Margaret have to rob me of my faith in human love? If I could forget her, I believe I would again be glad of life.'

"But he can not forget her," she sighed mournfully. "He has met many a fine, virtuous girl since then, who would have made him a good wife, but he has remained cold. None of them could replace the one whom he loved.

"Can you understand, Miss Crawford, how I suffer from this? My son has everything that heart could wish—wealth, fame and honor. But there is one thing that he does not possess and can not find—happiness! For a moment he had it, then lost it—perhaps forever!"

"Oh, don't say that, Mrs. Mirabeau! Perhaps it is God's will that has brought me here," rejoined Lillian warmly. "Margaret Wentworth has been through the same sufferings as your son; she, too, has been unhappy through their parting.

"Her heart cries out for the happiness lost through her own fault. But she does not dare to approach your son who once told her that nothing was more repellent to him than women who throw themselves at his feet."

The old lady nodded.

"Very likely he did," she replied. "But that has nothing at all to do with the case. He loved Miss Wentworth, and if she had been sincerely sorry and came to him and admitted her error, he would have received her with open arms.

"The very admission of her mistake, the very fact that she had made the first advances—would have been proof of her honesty of feeling, and would have shown him that her love for him was true and deep and would withstand the hardest test.

"Many a time he has said to me: 'I can not

understand Margaret—I cannot conceive that I have been so absolutely mistaken in her. Her words on that evening were a positive antithesis to her whole spirit.

" 'I can only find one explanation: that someone has come between us with the purpose of separating us. I wish I could get to the bottom of it, but I suppose I never will, for only Margaret, herself, can explain the matter.

" 'But to ask her—to go to her, I cannot and will not, for I will never again give her cause to imagine that I am in pursuit of an heiress.' "

"They both have too much pride," said Lillian, "to make a sacrifice to their vanity. Margaret has suffered untold pain from the consequences of that evening, but never a complaint has come from her lips until lately, when I brought the matter up myself.

"Then, in tears, she told me all, and I could see how good it was for her to unburden herself of the load which she had so long been carrying in silence.

"People have been wondering why she has never favored any suitors, including young men of known wealth, to whom her dowry could be no object whatever.

"Naturally, I was very much grieved for Margaret, and determined to do what I could to set matters right again.

"It became necessary for me to come to Quebec," added, blushing vividly, "for private reasons, and I at once thought of a way to carry out my wish.

"Without telling Margaret anything of my plan, I induced her to accompany me. I am to be married here and she will be my bridesmaid. Margaret consented, and we arrived here yesterday.

"Oh, Mrs. Mirabeau, let us bring these two proud creatures together and reconcile them to one another. They have been separated by a terrible mistake. A well-

arranged chance meeting might reunite them.

"Of course, Margaret must never know that my hand has been in the game; the thought of it would be so humiliating for her. Perhaps you can see a good way of doing it!"

The old lady looked thoughtfully at the young girl.

"Do you really believe that your friend still loves my son with all her soul, and that she is suffering from remorse?" she asked.

"I am as certain of that as of the love of my own betrothed," was Lillian's ready reply.

"Well, then, with God's help, all may be well," said Mrs. Mirabeau. "But I prefer to tell my son openly and honestly. He will be happy to know the truth, and will gladly seize every opportunity to regain her.

"By whom were you introduced here?"

"Miss Gunther," answered Lillian, who also explained how they met at Mrs. Sanders.

Mrs. Mirabeau's features brightened.

"That will make things so much easier. Leave it to Gerard's cleverness. He will come, perhaps, before the day is over. Will you be at home in the afternoon?"

"Yes, Mrs. Mirabeau," retorted Lillian. "I will stay at home and take good care that Margaret does not go out. We will have to go diplomatically about it."

With moist eyes, the artist's mother took both her hands.

"God bless you for this deed of love!" she cried. "Well, then, we are allies. I look forward to another and yet happier meeting with you."

Lillian left the house in joyous spirits, and a heart full of joyous hope.

Old Mrs. Mirabeau's spirits were no less high, and she could scarcely await the moment when she would

rejoin her.

After lunch it was her custom to take a siesta, but this day she asked her son to sit down beside her in the window seat.

"Gerard, have you ever heard the name of Lillian Crawford before?" she asked, looking searchingly into his eyes.

A deep, red flush mantled his brow.

"Yes, mother, when I saw her she seemed to me as though I were already acquainted with her, but while I was at work I suddenly remembered where I had seen those features—in a photobraph—it was at Margaret Wentworth's," he said hesitatingly, and quickly turned his face away as thongh it gave him pain to utter her name.

"Yes, that's it," Mrs. Mirabeau replied. "Miss Crawford is Margaret's friend, Gerard. She is with her in Quebec."

With the speed of lightning, he turned his head again.

"What do you say, mother — Margaret — is here?!" he cried.

"Yes, my son. Now sit down quietly and let me tell you what brought her to me here today."

With head bent low and breathing heavily, the young artist listened to the words of his mother, who saw his heroic efforts to control his agitation.

"It was that, then," he cried, when she had come to the end. "It is just what I thought. It was that, then, which estranged her from me. Oh, mother, now I understand it all.

"What she heard could not help but shake her faith in me. Poor child, what she must have suffered—perhaps even more than I have, for in addition, she suffered from remorse.

"Yes, mother, Margaret is proud. Now I know why she never attempted a reconciliation. Oh, mother, I feel as if heaven had opened and I could see all its glories!"

"Mother," he said slowly, after a pause, "do you think that Margaret would receive me if I came to her?"

Mrs. Mirabeau smiled.

"Of course, Gerard, did not Miss Crawford say that she suffered for her fault and had been unhappy at losing you? Oh, Gerard, I will be so glad to see this unfortunate misunderstanding cleared up."

"Would you love Margaret, mother?" he cried joyously.

"If you love her, and if she makes my big boy happy, I must love her, too," smiled the old lady through her tears. Go, Gerald, and bring Margaret to me."

Chapter 219.

THE NURSE'S STORY.

PHILIP GORDON was the most surprised man in the world, and he was vastly pleased. Mr Shields, the old lawyer, had insisted upon tiding him over his financial difficulties. And not only that, Mr. Shields had insisted upon him accepting a loan for nearly half a million dollars without security.

It had all come so sudden and so unexpected that he did not know what to make of it.

Continued in next number

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Only these Cards and Nothing Else can be thy Savior

were his continual thoughts. Under the impulse of this inspiration he informed the chief of the magical power of these cards, which in possession of an enemy would cause dire disaster to his family as well as himself. Thoroughly frightened the chief gave this treasure to Korn and escorted him to the seacoast far from his place of captivity. After various wanderings and adventures he arrived at the German colony Kameron, where he secured a position on board a Hamburg merchant ship; and through these events we became possessed of the *Genuine Cards*, the handwritten interpretation and instructions how to use them.

M'lle LeNormand destroyed her cards and instructions before her death and had the ashes inclosed in a vessel of lead and which was laid in her tomb according to her last will, so these interpretations written for Napoleon I., and so cleverly saved by Korn were the only and genuine existing. These cards—Oraculum—have been tried in important events and are indeed *"Answers of Destiny."* For the believers it is a sacred treasure and in many instances an article of great value. Unbelievers can pass many tedious hours pleasantly in many ways, particularly in answering delicate questions correctly or otherwise. M'lle LeNormand's instructions in both English and German are complete and plain, and can readily be interpreted by everybody.

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